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**Review of Marochetti, E.F. (2010) The Reliefs of the Chapel of
Nebmaatra Mentuhotep at Gebelein**
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MAROCCHETTI, E.F. Translated by Kenneth Hurry — The Reliefs of the Chapel of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Gebelein. (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East, 39). Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden, 2010. (29,5 cm, XIV, 154, LVII plates). ISBN 978-90-04-17964-6. ISSN 1566-2055. € 146,-.

Italian Egyptologist Ernesto Schiaparelli might be famous for his archaeological endeavors at the end of the 19th-early 20th century, few of his excavations resulted in proper publications. Large numbers of reliefs, statues, artefacts, etc. followed him to the *Museo Egizio* in Turin. Several years ago a research project was launched to reorganize and correlate items in the museum's collection originating from his infamous expeditions. The publication under review comprises just one such undertaking.¹⁾ Reliefs from the temple of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep (11th dynasty, 2064-2013 B.C.) are presented as the General Catalogue of the Turin Museum.

Apart from 270 limestone relief fragments collected by Schiaparelli in 1910 (working on behalf of the *Regio Museo di Antichità Egizie*), the study also includes 10 blocks housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo — seven of which hitherto

¹⁾ This study was originally conducted as a Doctoral thesis: Fiore Marochetti, E., (1998) *La Capella di Nebhepetra Mentuhotep a Gebelein*. PhD thesis, Università di Roma La Sapienza. Unpublished. Aspects of this study were previously published as: Fiore Marochetti, E. (2005), 'The Temple of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Gebelein. Preliminary Report', in L. Pantalacci and C. Berger-el-Naggar (eds.) *Des Néferkaré aux Montouhotep* [etc.], 145-163. Lyon: Maison de l'Orient.

unpublished. The latter were found reused in Ptolemaic houses at Gebelein by Eugène Grébaut at the end of the 19th century.

Although “*in essence a catalogue*” and therefore “*necessarily limited*” (p. vii), the publication certainly offers more than that. Relief fragments are not just reconstructed (as far as possible) to their original architectural setting. Moreover, Gebelein and the significance of its temple are considered within the framework of this politically enervating period. The publication therefore not only presents a valuable reference to the Egyptian antiquities housed in Turin’s Egyptian Museum. It also presents a valuable addition to literature on Egyptian temple decoration and development²), royal iconography, kingship and the course of events on the verge of the Middle Kingdom.

The publication is divided into 5 chapters and contains 32 black-and-white figures. In Chapter I (introduction) the reader becomes acquainted with the site of Gebelein (Arabic: “two mountains”). A history of its archaeological investigation is briefly outlined, starting with Grébaut and Georges Daressy in 1891-2 (*Service des Antiquités*), followed by Percy Newberry in 1893 (Egypt Exploration Fund). Schiaparelli followed in 1910, 1911, 1914 and 1920 (*Missione Archeologica Italiana*) and his work was later continued by Giulio Farina (1930, 1935, 1937). The introduction proceeds with a discussion on the site’s toponymy (*Jnrty*, *J’rw* and *Pr-ḥwt-ḥr* refer strictly to the locality of Gebelein) and a thorough account of historical events at Gebelein during the First Intermediate Period (FIP). Chapter II is devoted to dating the temple, while chapter III is concerned with the pantheon of Mentuhotep and the cult of Hathor “Lady of Dendereh”, in Gebelein known as “Lady of the Place” (*Jnrty*). The greater part of this publication is reserved for the catalogue: Chapter V.

The chapters are preceded by a preface (p. vii), List of Figures (p. ix) and a List of Plates (xi-xiv) and concluded by a Bibliography (pp. 143-154) and Plates section (I-LVII). Footnotes are used for references.

The binding of this hard-covered publication is of high quality; its paper is slightly transparent. Plates are printed on distinct “glossy” paper, definitely to the benefit of the photographs.

I. Introduction (pp. 1-15)

Gebelein’s toponym *Pr-ḥwt-ḥr* is attested for the first time during the reign of Sesostri I (Papyrus Reisner II) and evidently refers to the temple. No textual or material evidence hints at a local Hathor cult prior to the FIP. In Greek, on the other hand, *Aphroditopolis* still connects the site to Hathor.

Pages 9-15 present a concise account of Gebelein throughout the FIP, with a particular focus on Nebhepetra Mentuhotep’s interest and interference with the city and its surroundings. Gebelein and its temple of Hathor are firmly positioned within the setting this most turbulent, though still rather poorly understood period of pharaonic history, underscoring the importance of this temple — and its publication.

²) For another recent addition to the subject of early temple development in Egypt, including the FIP, see: Bussmann, R., (2010) *Die Provinztempel Ägyptens von der 0. bis zur 11. Dynastie. Archäologie und Geschichte einer gesellschaftlichen Institution zwischen Residenz und Provinz*. Boston, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers. See supra for the book review by Stan Hendrickx.

At the time, Gebelein (28 km. south of Thebes) was (denominative denominatively) administered by the 4th Upper Egyptian nome of Thebes, but fell within in the sphere of influence of the 3rd nome of Hierakonpolis. From the tomb of that nome’s ‘*great chief* [etc.]’ Ankhtify, we know that it was independent, controlling the southernmost region of the country. And Ankhtify proclaimed loyalty to the Herakleopolitan king. Such political sensitivities add to the importance of the temple and its associated iconography, described in more detail in chapters III and V. Marochetti continues with briefly introducing the ‘Theban house’ and sums up some of those rulers’ accomplishments that culminated in the (re)unification in year 30 / 39 (?) of Mentuhotep, Horus *Zm3-t3wy*. The publication of Gebelein’s temple contributes to filling in some lacunae in our understanding of historical events³) that effected this unification. Temple decoration in Gebelein portrays Mentuhotep as the *de facto* re-unifier. However, the proposed early dating for this temple (Chapter II) would attribute these scenes with an anticipated ideal. Scenes such as *smiting of the enemies* and *processions of the provinces* then might constitute traditional ingredients rather than sheer historical facts. Marochetti even speculates that the reunification under Nebhepetra Mentuhotep “*may still be considered as a theoretical date*” (p. 13). The author does not propose a possible revision for the date of re-unification. An moderation of the strict coherence of (changing) titles with this king’s accomplishments is suggested instead (see below).

II. Dating the chapel (pp. 17-22)

Based on style of iconography and use of the king’s “second titulary”⁴), this temple could be dated to the first part of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep’s reign. The second titulary was employed between regnal years 14 and 31 and coincides with the final campaigns against the Herakleopolitans of Dynasty 10. Wearing the crown of Lower Egypt (*c.f.* Cairo J.E. T.R. 1/11/17/8, discussion p. 73) ought to be associated only with his *third* titulary: *i.e.* as king of a re-unified country. Marochetti concludes that the relationship between “*the appearance of a complete titulary [...] and the reunification of the country is not after all a direct one*” (p. 17).

One of the Neby’s names and, perchance, the Golden Horus name are attested in Gebelein for the first time (p. 21). Noteworthy is that the attribution of name and title interchange.

The temple’s relief decoration is executed in a style very similar to that of the king’s chapel in Dendereh, which might implicate the same workmanship for both. The author does not investigate this possibility much further.

III. The cult of Hathor, Lady of Dendereh, and the pantheon of Mentuhotep (pp. 23-6)

A reconstruction of temple scenes indicates that “*a ceremonial was celebrated with the king as protagonist, performing rites of the handing over of royal power and the*

³) In this light, especially when referring to the hitherto under-documented synchronous developments in the northern part of the country (p. 10, note 77), one may refer to: Zitzman, M., (2010) *The necropolis of Assiut: a case study of local Egyptian funerary culture from the Old Kingdom to the end of the Middle Kingdom*. OLA 180. Leuven: Peeters. Fortuitously this publication also discloses previously unpublished material of a.o. Schiaparelli in Turin’s *Museo Egizio*.

⁴) Formerly attributed to a king Mentuhotep II. Scholarly consensus nowadays regards Mentuhotep I-III as one and the same person.

Zm3-t3wy" (p. 23). With an estimated foundation after year 14, the king might have legitimized himself by means of a *zm3-t3wy* ritual, *prior* to the actual reunification. As such, the temple was not solely dedicated to Hathor. Moreover, it was dedicated to the king's legitimation: providing him a political platform.

IV. Hypothetical reconstruction of architecture and decoration (pp. 27-31)

Only few fragments contain diagnostic architectural elements, *i.e.* cavetto cornice, torus moulding, corner-column fragments and some upper and lower registers. Just 10 (!) blocks were preserved intact. On-site, no remains bear witness of the building or its foundation, nor did Schiaparelli leave any fieldwork documentation. The temple's approximate dimensions are consequently determined by the reconstruction of some of the scenes and their hypothetical, though — based on comparisons — likely placement. Parallels are presented by (near)contemporary temples, resulting in three possible layouts (p.27). Only a front view with section of the façade is given as figure 11 (p.31) and a side view (*err: front view*) of the temple's exterior with the arrangement of registers as figure 12 (p.32). Dimensions for a reconstruction are calculated on p. 30.

- p. ix: List of Figures: no sources are cited for figs. 7-9.
- p. 28, fig. 7: caption *Bark Temples* differs from the caption given in the List of Figures (p. ix): *Bark Shrines*.
- p. 31, fig. 13. *Diameter of Column CGT 7003/16 (= Suppl. 12082)*. The sketch lacks measurements, for which one has to browse through the text: p. 31, diameter 12 cm. The sketch neither indicates the position of (a) hieroglyphic text-column(s); compare CGT 7003/16, p. 38-9.
- p. 32, fig. 12 is reproduced too small, rendering the reconstructed scenes invisible. For larger reproductions, refer to figs. 16 and 17.
- fig. 12 is placed on p. 32 and fig. 13 on p. 31. For the sake of consistency, figure numbers might have been exchanged.

V. Catalogue (pp. 33-142)

All 280 relief fragments are catalogued and divided into 5 main categories, A-E:

- A. Decoration of architectural elements (pp. 33-50)
 1. Small corner columns
 2. Cavetto cornice and torus moulding
 3. Ceiling
- B. Wall decoration: lower registers (pp. 50-70)
 1. Smiting of the enemy scene with procession of subjugated peoples and personifications
 2. Smiting of the enemy scene and temple foundation ceremony
 3. Procession of the provinces
 4. Fecundity figures or personifications
- C. Wall decoration: middle and upper registers (pp. 71-117)
- D. Wall decoration: lower registers with no context (pp. 117-121)
- E. Wall decoration: documents without context (pp. 121-131)

Each entry includes (systematically):

Inventory number; classification of blocks according to architectural feature; dimensions; stone type; relief (type) and/or paint; bibliography; description of decoration; note and/or comment; line drawing (scale 1:5).

A note on catalogue numbers used:

CGT: General Turin Catalogue

Suppl.: Schiaparelli's *Inventario Manoscritto*

Prov.: Provisional Cataloguing Turin

Cairo J.E. T.R.: Cairo Museum *Journal d'entrée* Temporary Register

Gebelein: *in-situ*

Relief fragments are factually described. The majority of fragmentary blocks are only briefly touched upon. A still considerable number is thoroughly discussed, provided with parallels and interpreted within a historical context. Obviously the prolixity of descriptions, interpretations, etc. is highly dependent on a block's state of preservation and possible leads it presents. One of the lengthier descriptions is given for fragment Cairo J.E. T.R. 1/11/17/10 (pl. LIII), on pp. 57-61: representing a *smiting of the enemies* -scene where the king, wearing his Upper Egyptian white crown, is about to smite a Lybian enemy; the 'Prince of Tehenu, Hedjuash'.

The classical model of temple decoration includes the sovereign with gods before the temple's deity, foundation scenes and ritual scenes. With regard to the political situation during the FIP, the lower registers are of particular interest. These include "typical temple scenes" with the *procession of the provinces*, *fecundity figures* and *smiting of the enemies*, but are presented as a historical "narrative" (see above). The cavetto cornice, then, was inscribed with Nebhepetra Mentuhotep's titles.

Cross-referencing between text (*i.e.* main text and catalogue) and plates, and between main text and catalogue is difficult: the author refers to catalogue numbers without providing page (catalogue) or plate numbers. Figs. 14-26 are disseminated over the catalogue, in between *unnumbered* line drawings and difficult to distinguish from one another. When the text refers to figures, the reader is consequently forced to repeatedly browsing the catalogue. The List of Figures (p. ix) does not provide page numbers.

The line drawings are mere sketches. Perhaps suited for receiving a general impression of the decoration's subject matter; they certainly do not substitute for, or add information to the photographs. The inaccuracy is *e.g.* witnessed on p. 111, CGT 7003/189 (= Suppl. 12295 + Prov. 3053); compare photograph on pl. XXXV: blocks fit together physically, not as line drawings. Also, it is not always made explicitly clear when a single drawing reproduces a block from multiple angles, *e.g.* p. 67 CGT 7003/83; compare photograph on pl. XVII.

- figs. 14-16: reconstructions are distributed over the catalogue, corresponding to the catalogue's subdivision. This certainly has its advantages. In favour of an overview, however, it would perhaps be more convenient to have all reconstructions assembled in one section.
- figs. 14-26: a *genuine* reconstruction, complementing the gaps within the scenes, was not attempted. The comparatively few fitting blocks nevertheless emphasize the fragmentary state of the temple altogether — complicating any reconstruction.

